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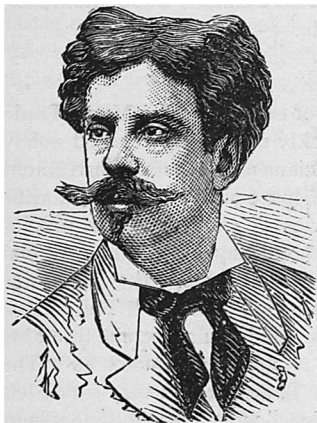
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The Art Gallery

DE NEUVILLE AND BERNE-BELLECOUR.



BOTH of these painters are men whose reputations have arisen in the half-score years that have elapsed between the last two Paris Universal Expositions—that of 1867 and that of 1878. We look in vain for the names of Étienne Berne-Bellecour and Alphonse Marie de Neuville in the little 1867 catalogue; even among the list of

water-color artists we fail to find their names.

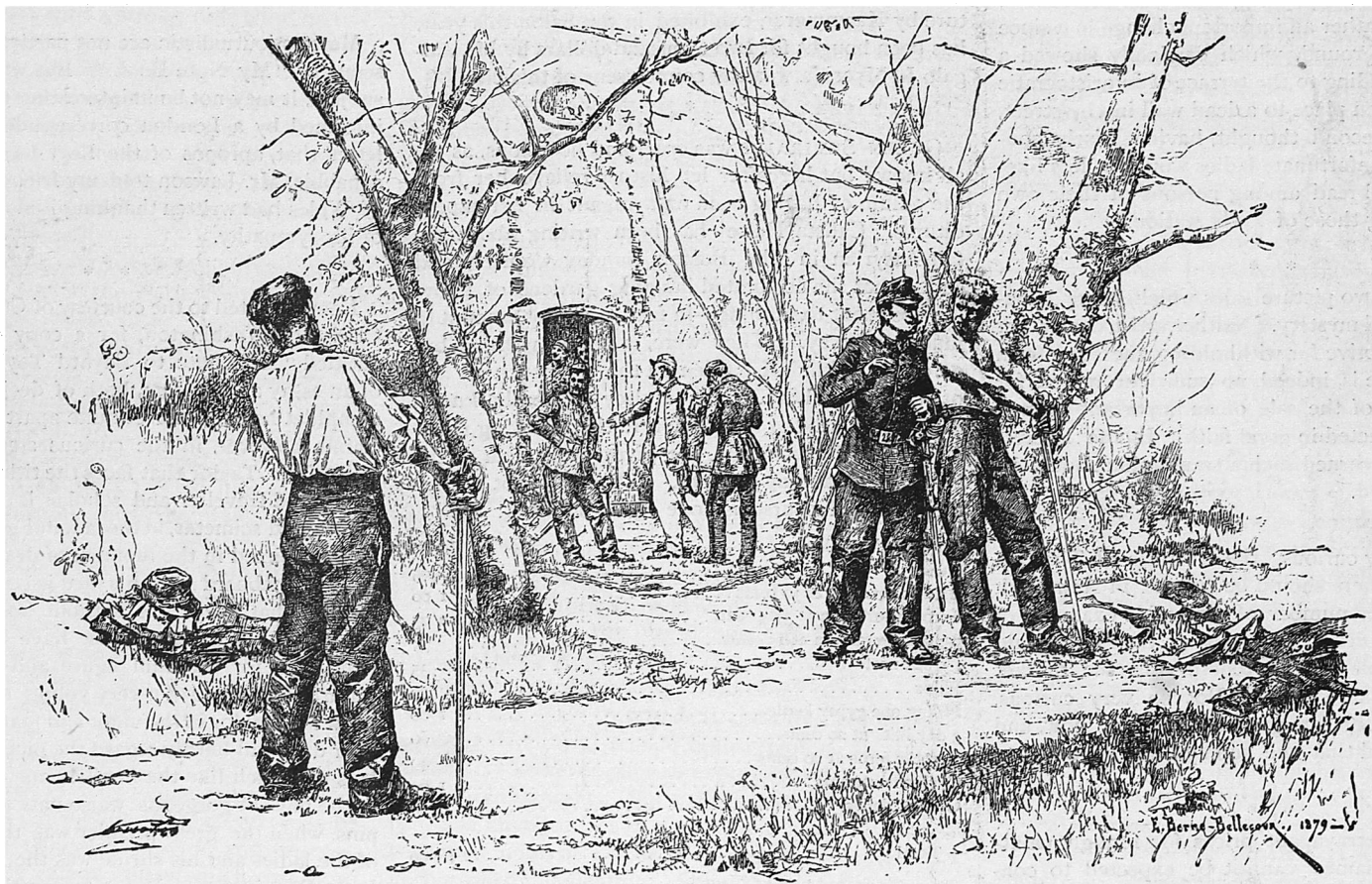
De Neuville, a designer on wood of the last degree of facility—a master of all the tricks, effects, tints, hatchings, and arrangements—one who knew how to

admitted De Neuville into the charmed circle of pictorial remedies. Besides him and Detaille, there were Dupray, Protais, Lançon, and Berne-Bellecour. These artists, by depicting the heroism of defeat, administered almost as much gratification to that class of French patriots who collected pictures as if they had been the Horace Vernets of many an Austerlitz, Wagram, and Friedland. French fighting was once more justified by French art. De Neuville and Berne-Bellecour had not been military painters before the events of 1870, though the others had; they were new recruits in the "genre;" they found it popular, and no doubt they found it profitable. Last summer the writer of this sent a young American draughtsman on wood to De Neuville, to see if the expert would admit him as a pupil, and explain to him all his marvellous tricks. "I no longer practise designing," said the designer. "I have renounced it altogether for oil-painting. But you might go to Émile Bayard."

The tone of the painter "by conviction," full of his new specialty and ready to forget his past, is not

by the painting, when Commandant Brasseur rendered himself so illustrious by his brave defence. Eight healing years have passed, the peaceful din of the Universal Exposition was in the writer's ears, and Paris was thronged with philosophic Germans who resorted thither as pupils in the arts of peace. For the patriotic painter, however, nothing was forgotten, no consolation was possible. Still in his excited brain was ringing the thunder of the cannonade, the roll-call which identified the dead, and the chanting of the Marseillaise. Thoughts of the French humiliation still keep full possession of this troubled spirit. It is a delirium perhaps, but the delirium of a fever to which we owe the masterpiece of "Le Bourget."

This masterpiece is a proud and virile composition, the greatest work, for feeling and depth, that has come out of the events of 1870-1871. If it could have been admitted to the Exposition, it would have been the sensational historical picture of the display. Never, it has been universally admitted, had the talent of the painter of the "Last Cartouche" and "Vil-



"ON THE DUELLING GROUND." BY BERNE-BELLECOUR.

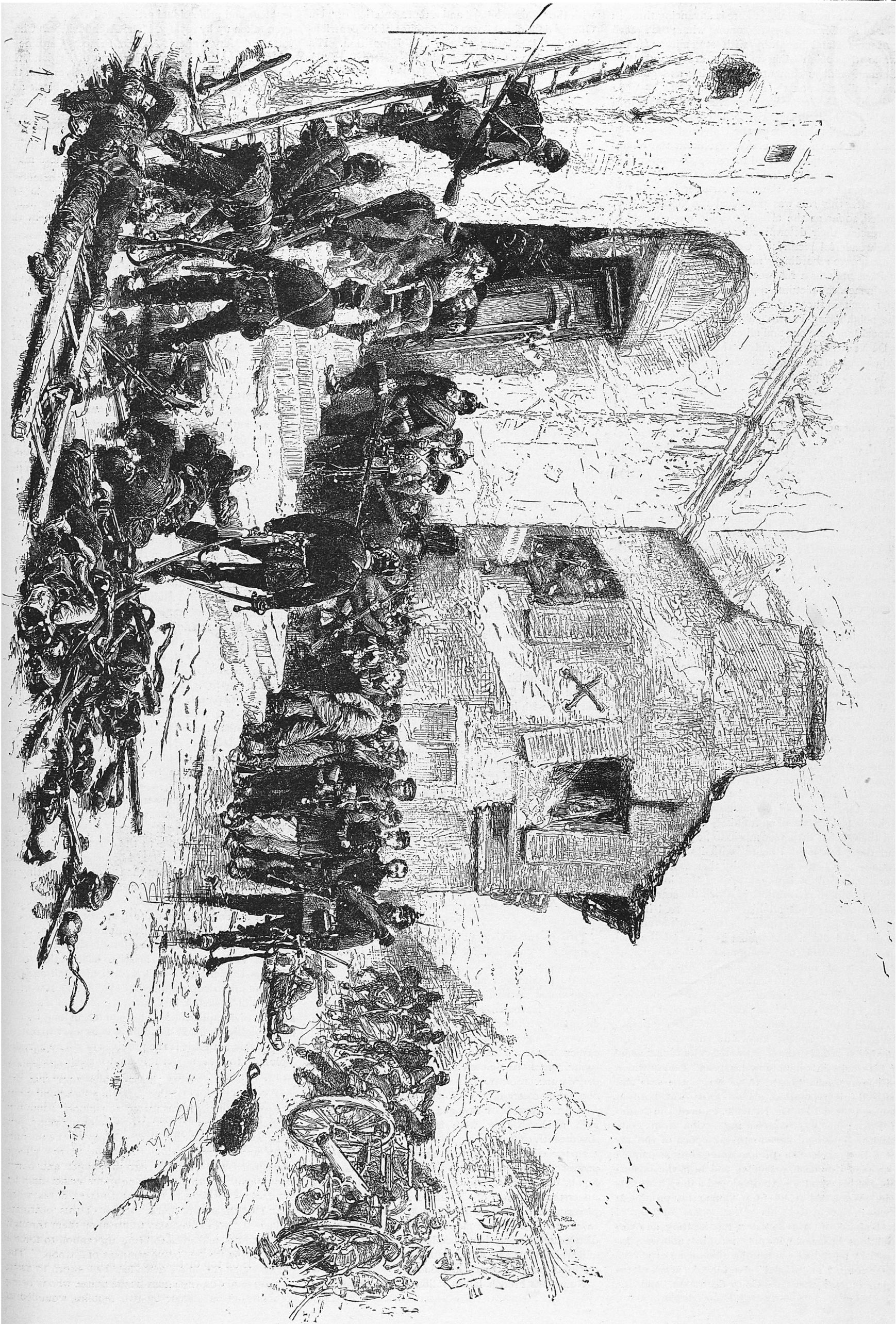
EXHIBITED IN THE SALON OF 1879.

"vignette" a drawing off with rich crumbly scribbles at the edge, and how to concentrate its crispness of light and shade in the centre—was not satisfied to remain a mere draughtsman in sober suits of black. The laurels of Miltiades—read Edouard Detaille—would not suffer him to sleep. Out of this restlessness proceeded a neck-and-neck contest with the painter of "Nos Vainqueurs," an immediate renown as colorist and battle-painter, and a prompt rise in the market value of his labor that threw even his handsome gains for boxwood drawing quite into the shade.

De Neuville, who had sketched Russians, Turks, and Sandwich Islanders for the "Tour du Monde," began to paint Prussians for the admirers of Detaille's battle-pictures. The canvases gained favor immediately, and all the sore hearts that resented Sedan and took artistic consolation from the military painters

the only tone we can perceive in De Neuville since assuming his present phase. Beneath and above all merely artistic conviction there is the conviction of the angry patriot. The following letter, which he wrote to Bergerat, the art-critic of the "Journal Officiel," sheds a flood of light on his personal character. Let our German readers, while still preserving their proper national feeling, make due allowance for the irritation of a defeated opponent. "You will do me a favor, if you speak of my picture of Bourget," wrote the artist, "by not recording that I have represented the Prussian conquerors as polished and considerate. That would make my hair creep, for it is the reverse of the truth. I have painted them as clumsy and insolent in their triumph, like so many buffaloes, just what they are in fact—as people who are not in the habit of being conquerors." This letter was written just eight years after the action of Bourget illustrated

lersexel" gone so high. The scene of "Le Bourget" represents the defence of the church and public square of the village, or rather the surrender after that defence was no longer tenable. During the second combat which the town was forced to support, a handful of valiant Frenchmen, consisting of only twenty privates and eight officers, driven to bay by the mitrailleurs and bayonets under the walls of the village church, decided to break into the edifice and barricade themselves there, swearing to die rather than let themselves be taken. General Ducrot, in his work on "The Defence of Paris," writes of this obstinate defence: "It was necessary to fire upon them through the windows, and even to bring up cannon to force a capitulation for this brave remnant of a troop." The death which the brave defenders had sworn to await is represented in the figure of the officer who is being brought out on a chair by two mobiles, wounded to



SCENE AFTER THE HEROIC DEFENCE OF THE CHURCH OF "LE BOURGET." BY DE NEUVILLE.

death, and whose helpless figure is advancing through files of indifferent Prussians, among whom the French prisoners stand haughtily with streaming wounds, while the neighboring windows are occupied by German soldiers contentedly smoking and glancing with satisfaction on the spectacle.

Fine as the picture was, however, and certain of a medal if exhibited, De Neuville's "chef-d'œuvre" was not admitted to a place at the Universal Exposition. By a judicious and honorable resolution the organizers of the display decided to refuse all subjects calculated to wound the feelings of the German visitors who should examine the Fine Arts section. In due time after this rule was published the Germans concluded, so far as the artistic exhibit was concerned, to rescind their determination of not participating. The wonderful pictures of Gebhardt, and Liebel, and Knaus were accordingly made visible to the throngs at Paris, but, as a reciprocal compliment for French abstinence, the pictures representing the victories of 1871, such as those which glared so exultingly upon the neighboring French galleries at our Centennial Exposition, were one and all excluded.

De Neuville, though still youthful in appearance, is old enough to have received a Salon medal of the third class in 1859—presumably for designing, not for oil-painting. After he had begun to be known for his canvases illustrating the Franco-Prussian war, the merit of his workmanship, and the gratefulness of the peculiar salve he had invented for French honor, began to be acknowledged. He was made Chevalier of the Legion of Honor in 1873. He was born at St. Omer, Pas de Calais, and educated for his profession in the atelier of Picot. In 1877 he gained great fame at the Salon by his picture of "The Bridge over the railway at the Styring passenger-station, an episode of the battle of Forbach, August 6, 1870." This action represents the attack on a railroad depot, which the Germans had turned into a fortress. A few French chasseurs, who had defended the edifice, took refuge behind the standing trains of cars, where the Prussians opened a murderous fire upon them at fifty paces from the barricaded windows of the depot. The narrow bridge crossing the railway cut became the scene of a violent hand-to-hand combat, where the chasseurs of the Third Battalion held the position for awhile, until compelled by the arrival of new Prussian reinforcements to retreat.

We always pity an artist whose evil genius leads him to wreck himself on battle-pictures. The conditions of military illustrations make impossible all the qualities which are proper to high art, and preclude grace, beauty, balanced composition, and ideal calm. All that we can say is, that if this particular kind of machinery has to be manufactured, it is better that it should be manufactured well. De Neuville is a practised, an infinitely clever composer; but there is but little true music to be got out of war, and the "Battle of Prague," with its "cries of the wounded," is better as a curiosity than as a model for imitation. Still it is not surprising that in the dead level of modern civilization, in which the searcher for the picturesque finds all his dramas dressed in ugly and dreary garments, these illustrators of actual life should send out a detachment to take off the picturesque uniforms and equipments and harmonious evolutions of military life, just as they send off another detachment to capture the modish dresses and graces of "La Femme."

"La Femme" and "Le Soldat" have about equally occupied the other subject of our notice—Berne-Bellecour. He is best known in this country, perhaps, as a capital painter in water-colors; but some of his works in oil, notably his grand canvas which we engrave, have passed to us across the seas and justified his reputation. This artist was born at Boulogne, and like De Neuville entered the studio of Picot; he also received instruction from Félix Barrias. Distinguished up to the epoch of the war for a lively selection of anecdote-subjects, painted with plenty of dash, precision, and brio, the misfortunes of his country have developed a deep historical vein. We would select from among his prominent works in the old style his "Désarconné," or "Out of the Saddle," of the 1869 Salon, representing an over-ambitious huntsman limping into his doorway, assisted by a groom. At the same Salon he exposed a water-color, "The Lover." An oil-color work of the Salon of 1872 was "Un Coup de Canon," and this,

with the "Désarconné" and a representation of "Un Officier de Mobiles," was the amount of his contributions in oil-painting to the late Exposition. His lighter style was there seen in the water-colors "A Russian Coach-Driver," "A Japanese Lady," and "The Bouquet."

The resolution to exclude the pictures referring to the Prussian war was as great a misfortune to Berne-Bellecour as to De Neuville. The latter had on hand his "Bourget," the former was ready with "La Tranchée," or "The Ditch," from the 1877 Salon, with its death-scene of Lieut. Michel, Tirailleur de la Seine, at Boulogne-on-the-Seine, January, 1871; and likewise with "The Tirailleurs of the Seine at Malmaison, October 21, 1870." Great tumults arose in the world of artists over the exclusion of these subjects, which deprived an important class of French painters of fame and honors. A compromise was effected, and the great picture-merchant Goupil arranged the "Bourget," and the "Tranchée," and the "Tirailleurs" in an exhibition of thirty battle-pictures in his magazine of the Rue Chaptal. The little gallery was vastly popular, and of course not a German in Paris failed to see it; but this Teutonic fame scarcely recompensed either of our two artists for the fact that their masterpieces could get no medals.

The Salon picture of Berne-Bellecour for the year 1879 is now in America awaiting the selection of some collector of taste. It arrived at the gallery of Knoedler & Co. in the month of September. It is of unusual size for the artist, and painted with address, wit, accuracy, and decision. It is called "Sur le Terrain," or "On the Duelling-ground," and represents a garrison quarrel. How plainly we see that, for the young soldier who has stripped for the fight, it is a first affair of honor! Angry, sullen, in the pride of youth, with the muscles and bones of a young Hercules, it is a question whether he will be a match for the dry and wiry, and cool, and very experienced duellist who turns his sleeve up without the fuss of undressing, and exhibits his angular back to the spectator. The regimental physician turns away to examine his case of instruments, while the seconds in the affair, who have rushed out from the mess-table without their equipments in the hurry of the quick insult and quarrel, are putting on their sword-belts. The ancient château, used as the barracks, with its tower and extinguished roof, boils over with interested soldier-spectators from every window; one casement is barred, showing that the room is the caserne-prison, and out of this looks dully a stubble-bearded, nightcapped face of some comrade confined for breach of discipline. The fine training ever to be found in a French artist in matters of anatomy is exhibited with a little pardonable over-emphasis and pride by the painter in the solid, flexible body and arms of the combatant who has bared himself for the sword-practice.

FAMOUS OLD-TIME AMATEURS.

THE recent revival of engraving and etching, as congenial occupations for ladies of culture, is no new thing under the sun, as both these arts have been favorite pastimes of high-born amateurs as well as of professional artists, for centuries back. Isabella Cunio, of Ravenna, is said to have practised wood engraving with her brother Albéric in the thirteenth century, long before the master of 1423 put the earliest known date on a woodcut, the "St. Christopher" in Lord Spencer's collection. Diana Ghisi, of Mantua, took a prominent place among the copper-plate engravers of the sixteenth century. Elisabetta Sirani, of Bologna, and Gertrude Roghman, a Dutch lady, were famous etchers of the seventeenth century.

In the eighteenth century the Marquise de Pompadour set the fashion to ladies of practising the higher branches of pictorial art. She herself etched, under the guidance of C. Vanloo and Cochin, many plates after designs of Boucher, and a set of sixty-three etchings after cameos of Le Guay, which she distributed among her friends during her lifetime, and which were afterwards published in a volume to testify to her proficiency in the art.

Numerous French ladies followed her example as

amateur and professional artists, and the pursuit was even taken up by royalty. The Archduchesses Charlotte and Mary Anne of Austria, Princess Caroline of Würtemberg, and Princess Elizabeth of England, the daughter of George II., amused themselves with the etching needle, and their performances in black and white are still coveted by collectors for their portfolios. Angelica Kauffman and Mary Cosway spread the taste for engraving among English women, and, besides Caroline Watson, who is deservedly famous for her mezzotint engravings, we could quote many other names of talented lady etchers, like Sarah Green and Isabella Countess of Carlisle. Queen Victoria practised etching in earlier days, and her daughters, it is said, have all been instructed in the art.

Private Galleries.*

COLLECTION OF THE ESTATE OF ALEXANDER TURNEY STEWART.

CONCLUDING NOTICE.

ANOTHER genre picture, by Zamacois, wafts us from the humors of the present to the humors of long ago. It is an antechamber of King Francis the First, with his menagerie of court dwarfs and buffoons, in full conclave assembled. How bad the air is in this crowd of captive monstrosities, how plain the close menagerie-smell, how mephitic the atmosphere of a despotism in its most tyrannical purlieus! The painter has comprehended what a telling blow at feudalism can be delivered by hitting at once at feudalism's meanest fashion, that of purchasing its merriment from imprisoned unfortunates. In the early part of his career the sardonic Zamacois dwelt much on this aspect of feudal systems—on the vagaries of Pedro the Cruel, and the miseries of Triboulet in "Le Roi s'amuse"—representing many a group of wretched, objectless hunchbacks in splendid liveries and gilded cages, preparatory to planting his downright anti-monarchical blow in "The Education of a Prince." The present scene is his most elaborate effort in this kind, and his sarcastic humor finds vent, too, in a notion that never occurred to a painter before, and would only occur to a Spaniard—he places his own portrait and the portraits of his friends on the shoulders of these unfortunates. When we see the symmetrical profiles, with grim mock-serious expressions, of his comrades Worms and Berne-Bellecour on the hunched backs of dwarfs, his own lean face in the ass-eared cap of a jester, and his pretty young brother's fresh cheeks and curls over the collar of a saucy page, we discern some meaning within the lines akin to the moody strictures of Goya—some half-uttered jibe to the effect that the art of the Second Empire was one of bondage and baseness, certain to take its place in the history of painting as a form of gilded degradation, and able to bear the slave's worst misfortune—that of smiling in slavery.

Shall we consider that the bondage in question is shown by such painters of the empire as Toulmouche, one of whose most elaborate efforts is shown in "The Serious Volume"? This insatiate elaboration of a poverty-stricken idea—this wealth of detail and research of microscopes applied to a painter's jest worthy at most of a sketch in Charivari—is it not a sign of slavery, of humiliation? The painter, in one of the most highly-finished boudoir scenes ever painted, simply asserts that it is the province of "The Serious Volume" to put modern folks to sleep. A large, handsome lady in a modish cap of lace, and another lady of slenderer proportions, have fallen upon each other's shoulders in uncontrollable slumber, while the good book that has been trying to entertain them effects a cataract down their laps unnoticed. The jest is not so bad, but is it observing the proportions of things to worry over the painting-niceties of Metz and Breughel, and Mieris and Terburg, and produce at last a masterpiece of artistic delicacy, merely to declare once more that sermons are soporifics? A picture with a piquant title is almost necessarily in a false position; we glance at it to see if the expressions are good, if the faces will yield us a moment's smile. If on top of that we find it making a claim to

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